

## Winter Light at Wallaga Lake

*For friends of the forest*

A scattering of undergrowth  
trails the woodland to a close,  
along the margins of a lake;  
in sad and silent pose.  
And down the dancing distance,  
where shadows ebb and flow,  
like phantoms from a broken dream;  
all soft and silky slow,  
the spotted gums grow taller  
on spears of wonder bright:  
cloaked all around in majesty,  
and veils of lustrous light.

For this is where the world is true;  
where love and friendship last;  
where our colours must be chosen,  
and nailed upon the mast.

Wide Brown Damned, the Eden Management Area.

**E**xting our logged-out country  
**D**enude each mountain range  
**E**xport to far horizons  
**N**ative forest for loose change.

**M**y #!%@&! this logged-out country  
**A** land of sand-filled drains  
**N**owhere to hide from log trucks  
**A**nd white utes ad nauseam range  
**G**one where those tree-tall valleys?  
**E**xting those cool dark streams  
**M**achines rape unmapped gullies  
**E**xting the bush with greed,  
**N**o beauty in this terror  
**T**his stump-filled land we see.

**A**nother hundred trucks or so  
**R**oll laden down Edrom Road  
**E**very log a piece of the forest  
**A** piece of everyone's home.

A B Whan 2012

## **FIRE ON GULAGA**

Gazing from a lookout  
Above a cheerless bay  
Silver tide sedated  
Shags lose noonday rays

Fishing boats are skulking  
Waves lamely lap the shore  
Gulaga is burning  
Tragedy's afore

Grand old lady Gulaga  
Where birthing spirits dwell  
Rages like a furnace  
In environmental hell

Fire roaring up to glory  
Blocks out springtime sun  
Mismanagement of forests  
Is how it had begun

Birds and wildlife scatter  
Nature's species die  
Flames engulf the ridges  
Earth's sweet spirits cry

Darkest day for Gulaga  
In its eternal life  
The carelessness of foresters  
Cut through it like a knife

Peace and all its beauty  
Lies blackened smouldering charred  
Spirits are offended  
Native legends scarred

A wanton act of terror  
Less thought or common sense  
Such offence of nature  
Shall deliver consequence

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THE ANZAC'S INCENSE - Denis Kevans

*"Yes, we heard their voices murmur, as the streamers broke and flew,  
"I'll love you forever, and forever I'll love you",  
Did we live and die in madness, in a waste-land over there,  
Just to see Australia's forests churned to woodchips over here?"*

A boarding house in Sydney, an old man sitting there,  
The smoke of burning gumleaves drifting around him through the air,  
"It's my incense, mate" he tells me, "it comes from down the Coast,  
The gumleaves of the forest, the ones I love the most.

"This incense was my wedding gift, it was our wild bouquet,  
We breathed in deep the incense, before I sailed away,  
A net of moonlight drifting across her face and hair,  
And the incense of the gumleaves drifting around us, everywhere.

"She'd parcel up the gumleaves, and she'd post'em far away,  
We sweated on the postie, and his parcel, on that day,  
In silence we would gather, and breathe the incense in,  
The incense of the gumleaves burning in our dixie tin.

"The acrid stink of battle in our incense sped away,  
And scenes of home and loved ones, entered in, as bright as day,  
And we heard their voices murmur, as the streamers broke and flew -  
"I'll wait for you forever, and forever I'll love you".

"Now I stumble through the nightmare of a forest we once knew  
And I thought I heard her saying - "Sonny, Sonny, is it you?"  
But when I turned to greet her, just a splintered stump I saw,  
And the refuse from an army that has won the forest war.

"I had hoped to find the moonlight, as it rested on her hair,  
All I saw was litter burning and the smoke fumes everywhere,  
I had hoped to smell the incense that was always in the green,  
But I only smelt the chain-saws and the stink of dieseline".

*"Yes, we heard their voices murmur, as the streamers broke and flew -  
"I'll love you forever, and forever I'll love you",  
Did we live and die, in madness, in a waste-land over there,  
Just to see Australia's forests churned to woodchips over here?"*